



EARTH TIDES

PAGAN NETWORK NEWS

PAGAN PRIDE STATEWIDE!

MABON 1997 \$1.50

About EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK

The EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK was established in 1989 as a support resource for Maine's Pagan community. This community is diverse, independent and geographically distant. We practice earth-based alternative religions. Most of us worship in existing groups or as solitaries, but feel a need for contact and a shared forum to express opinions and concerns over issues bearing on the Pagan Community in general.

The EPN keeps names, addresses and phone numbers confidential except to other network members. Individuals who are under 18 years of age must submit written parental approval to attend gatherings or study with members. The EPN will aid in establishing contacts between individuals if asked to do so, but accepts no legal responsibility for the results.

This newsletter comes out eight times per year around the Sabbats. Literary, poetic and artistic contributions are welcome as well as letters, articles, book reviews and editorial pieces. Please keep submissions to no more than two pages, typed and double spaced. You may also send your submission in ASCII, MSWord or WordPerfect format on disc or submit it by e-mail to mugwert@ime.net or wachel@wa2000.winarea.biddeford.com

Submissions will be edited for grammar, spelling and to fit available space. The EarthTides Pagan Network News is copyrighted 1997 by The EarthTides Pagan Network. All submissions remain the property of the authors and may not be reproduced without their permission.

Subscriptions are available for a suggested donation of \$11.00 US funds per year. Single copies may be obtained by sending a \$1.50 donation and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to EPN, PO Box 161, East Winthrop, ME 04343. The next EPNN will come out just around Samhain. We hope to hear from more of you before then. Blessed Be!

EPNN STAFF: Arwen Evenstar, Harper Meader, Kelt, Elkwing, and Mugwort

MABON

The days have lost half of their sunlight and the trees are beginning to turn. Soon, the forecast will be for frost and all across the region gardeners will be running outside at twilight with baskets and bags in an attempt to save as much food as possible. Every inch of the house will be covered in green tomatoes, hanging herbs, and peppers ready to freeze. Some year, Common Ground and first frost will happen the same weekend and we'll all be in trouble!

The time has come to being the potted plants in off the deck. The cooking herbs are tall and hearty; and the annuals need to be planted in the kitchen window. These herbs are part of a kitchen/garden Witch's main ritual tools. What could be more transformational than turning seeds into food and food into a delectable dish?

Along with the herbs are the magickal plants. The rue has come through well, and the pot of mugwort and wormwood add a lovely silvery hue to their corner. There are also two patchouli plants that I peel several leaves off of a few days before ritual and crumble them onto charcoal. These plants bring me closer to my ancestors; how many times has this ritual been repeated by others in history? How many wise women and shamans have carefully potted their plants and learned from their cycles?

And as the plants come in, so do we begin to turn inwards. Time to leave the world and the dark and find warmth and hope inside ourselves. Time to slow and contemplate. Time to sleep. As soon as the roots come in!

In This Issue

EVENTS CALENDAR	2
EARTH TIDES CONTACTS	3
PASSAGES	4
UPCOMING FESTIVALS IN NEW ENGLAND	4
HARVEST CELEBRATION	4
A LETTER TO EPNN	4
NOTES FROM THE UNDERWORLD	5
READERS' FORUM: WHY A FOLLOW A PAGAN PATH	6
OTHER PAGAN PUBLICATIONS	6
THE PAGAN PANTRY	6
NEWS FROM IMMANENT GROVE	7
STARCAT'S CORNER BY STARCAT	7
FOOLERY	8
BYLAWS OF THE EARTH TIDES PAGAN NETWORK	9
EPN QUESTIONNAIRE	11

E.P.N. P.O. Box 161, EAST WINTHROP. ME 04343



The calendar section is a service to our members. It is intended for events that are either free or have a nominal donation. Several of these places have more extensive workshops; please call them for info. Support our supporters!

Sept. 19-21 MOFGA Common Ground Fair. Windsor Fair Grounds. Come visit the EarthTides Booth in the Social/Political Action area. To volunteer to staff the booth call 848-2850

Sept. 22 MABON 7:56 PM DST

Oct. 1 New Moon 12:51 PM DST

Oct. 4 Harvest Celebration, Fort Williams Park, Cape Elizabeth 1 p.m.—Sunset. See the announcement on page 4 of this issue or contact Jane, 885-0424, pjane@maine.rr.com or Seshet 727-5844, anubis@mix-net.net

Oct. 9 First Quarter Moon 8:22 AM DST

Oct. 15 Full Hunters Moon 23:46 AM DST

Oct. 18 Dowsers Gathering in Bangor. The group meets the 3rd Saturday of each Month. For info call Gordon Barton 963-5801

Oct. 21 Dowsers Gathering in Gardiner. The group meets on the 3rd Tue. of each month. For info call Barbara Foust 582-8615

Oct. 23 Last Quarter Moon 12:48 AM DST

Oct. 26 Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 AM Turn back those clocks!

Oct. 31 SAMHAIN

Oct. 31 New Moon 5:01 AM EST

Monthly Dowsers Gathering in Falmouth. Contact Richard McKenzie 797-2513.

Winthrop Area Saturday Night Drum Jam - Held semi-monthly at One Heart Studio. Donation \$2.00 call 377-3967(days) for more info.

Meditation and Mysticism. Held every Sunday at Silo 7 Bangor Call 942-5590 for more info.

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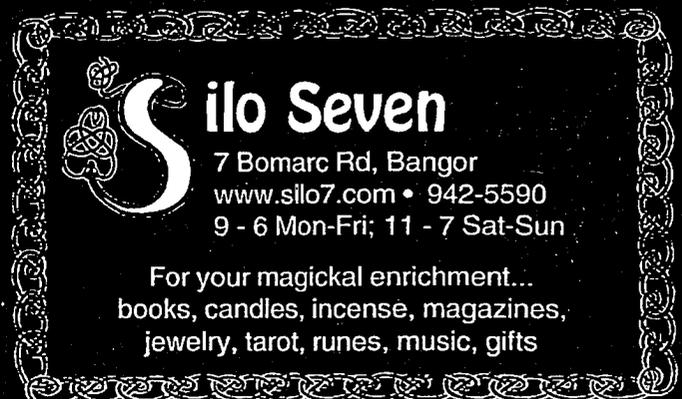
The Birth of Venus and Other Tales

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L. Carlucci, P O box 283 Eddington ME 04428

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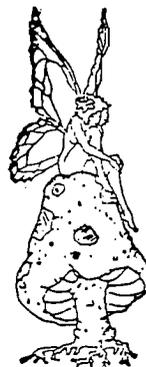
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EARTHTIDES CONTACTS

NOTE: The EarthTides Pagan Network does not screen the contacts listed below. We are not the "policemen" of Paganism in Maine and would frankly resent such an authority. Everyone should be able to follow their own path. But the downside to this freedom is that You must exercise GOOD JUDGEMENT when using this list. Anyone who makes you uncomfortable or asks you to do anything which makes you uncomfortable is probably wrong for you. Individuals who are under 18 years of age must submit written parental approval to attend gatherings or study with members. EPN will aid in establishing contacts between individuals if asked to do so, but accepts no legal responsibility for the results

EarthTides Members:

Augusta Area:

Bill and Johanna Chellis - 685-3860 Pantheists working with the circle, wheel, and labyrinth.

Immanent Grove: a fellowship of practicing pagans of all persuasions. All are encouraged to pursue their own world views & personal relationships with the Gods. Contact: Harper or Evenstar, The Immanent Grove, PO Box 233, Readfield, ME 04355.

Wahtonah Grove - A Pagan circle honoring a variety of traditions, newly founded, April 11, 1997. Dedicated to seeking knowledge and understanding, as well as to good friendship. Contact: Wahtonah Grove, PO Box 257, East Winthrop ME 04343-0257 or e-mail: QGCY88B@prodigy.com

Bangor Area:

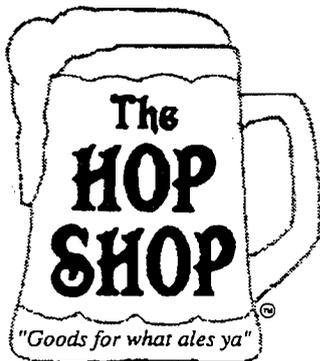
Elkwing and Mugwort - 848-2850 We're garden witches; Organic Gardening-arians. We are following the garden path to enlightenment! mugwert@ime.net

Clinton Area:

Nemeton Community Center Celtic Spirituality - 426-2964 We are rediscovering and practicing the nature-centered spirituality of the Celtic tribes. We observe and celebrate agrarian festivals, and holy days based on a celestial calendar and lunar cycles.

Tue.-Sat. 10-7
Sun. 10-5
Mon. Closed

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59 Portland Rd. (Rt. 100)
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Jay—Farmington:

Circle of the Jade Tiger - Kerry Phillips 645-9570 (after 5:00) - Goddess-oriented Shamanism, with a definite splash of Green Man energy. Simplistic and creative rituals that allow for growth and the understanding of death, change, and personal healing.

Portland—York County Area:

Jane 885-0424 Wiccan Priestess: networking, community, and ritual

LaWREnce and Seshet - We are the Iseum of the Hidden Pathways and a member of the Fellowship of Isis. We worship the God and Goddess in their many forms. We are an eclectic group focusing on the development of the higher consciousness of the hidden realms. 207-727-5844 or anubis@mix-net.net or <http://www.ime.net/teristar/Iseum>

Waterville Area:

Melissa Moon - 873-0528 Eclectic Wicca and Woman's Spirituality - Networking with all in the area online: comptutr@maine.com

Cyberspace

The Maine Pagan Mailing List All Maine Pagans with e-mail capability may join in the lively conversation. Send e-mail to pjane@maine.rr.com to sign up.

Bulletin Board: *Circular Logic* - 873-4981 Data line

OTHER CONTACTS (NOT EARTHTIDES MEMBERS):

Bangor:

Tom Lawrence - 866-3994 CUUPS: Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, monthly meeting in Bangor.

N. Waterford:

Circle of Trianon - Eclectic Wicca Gene and Judy Hemingway - 583-6519

Lewiston—Auburn Area

House O' The Greenwood - Lorelei - 783-5148 or loirelei@ime.net Focusing on using our spirituality and Eclectic Wiccan concepts to help us cope with daily life. While there is no formal coven at the moment, Lorelei is available to teach.

Waterville Area:

Dragon of the Mist - Druid/Pantheist Wicca Contact Dragon of the Mist 9-5, M-Sat., 873-7776, 5 East Concourse, Waterville

PASSAGES

Clayton Caldwell whose "Gramporiginal" cartoons graced many issues of this newsletter passed into Summerland earlier this month. May he travel in peace. Our condolences to his daughter Leigh Griffith, her husband Fred and their son Gwydion.

UPCOMING FESTIVALS IN NEW ENGLAND

10/10-13 Twilight Covening, Western MA. Intense small group ritual work then huge coordinated ritual. \$165 fee includes room and board. Earth Spirit Community, P.O. Box 502, Medford, MA 02155 (617)-395-1023

4/17-19 CraftWise, Danbury Hilton, Danbury, CT. Workshops, ritual, music. Craftwise, P.O. Box 457, Botsford, CT 06404 (203)-874-5832. e-mail: fdalton36@aol.com <http://www.mhv.net/tsheley/craftwise.html>

An international Pagan Events calendar is published by Larry Cornett, 13347 Caves Road, Chesterland, Ohio 44026. Six issue, one year hardcopy subscription: \$11.00 U.S. \$16 Canada. You can get a frequently updated calendar on the Worldwide Web at: <http://members.aol.com/lcornnalen/CALENDAR.htm>

HARVEST CELEBRATION

Join with Pagans and friends for a picnic & celebration of the season. Members of the Iseum of the Hidden Mysteries, an eclectic Wiccan group from southern Maine, will lead a ritual celebrating the harvest and honoring the Goddesses and Gods. It will be held at Fort Williams Park, Cape Elizabeth, Saturday, Oct. 4, 1997, from 1 P.M. to sunset. If anything more inclement than scattered showers is predicted, the rain date is Sunday Oct. 5.

Bring food and drink (and charcoal if you want to use the grills); warm layers of clothing, including hooded jackets (it gets windy); and, if you like, a symbol of your personal harvest, physical or spiritual, for blessing by the Gods and Goddesses who rule this season.

Picnic and social time starts at 1 p.m.; ritual is at 3. Those who wish may stay in the circle afterward to share music; explore the grounds, fly kites or do private rituals. The park is ours to use until sunset.

Kids and dogs are welcome; alcohol, drugs and fireworks are not. The town of Cape Elizabeth lets the public use this fabulous park for free; let's not abuse the gift.

For more information: Contact Jane, 885-0424, pjane@maine.rr.com or Seshet, anubis@mix-net.net, 727-5844.

A LETTER TO EPNN

In regards to the recent events concerning incorporation of the Earthtides newsletter as a non-profit organization: This is wonderful news, but why do some of us feel as though we've been left out of the official work concerning these actions? Couldn't more information have been provided in the newsletter itself, concerning the decision for incorporation and the development of pertinent ideas? Are we all expected to have E-mail capability to know what's going on and to gain current input? Is discrimination an EPN ethic?

As a contact for the EPN I would've appreciated knowing that the Spring retreat was a semi-official gathering with plans to make specific and profound decisions concerning incorporation, in order to inform interested parties and have the right to participate. I suddenly find ("... as of July 15th.") that EPN is fully incorporated and others are deciding the number equaling a Coven, and that Solitaries shall have miniscule representation, along with other rules. Readers are informed that most decisions shall be made via E-mail, leaving the remainder of us in the dark until someone deigns to inform us, or we use telephone re-dial continuously.

My observation and concern is that there is an extreme lack of "equal representation" when looking at Covens vs. Solitaries, as well as the discriminatory attitude concerning valuable input/observations of the computer-oriented vs. those without. I have questions concerning the need of written records from member congregations... last I knew this is the legal responsibility of the Board of Directors concerning *their* specific actions. Some suggestions I'd like to make would be: 50/50 representation in the Council (concerning Covens, Solitaries, and alternates), published information in the newsletter itself, information concerning how "Solitary members" re-file if they become "Covens." If EPN chooses and is given the ability to ordain clergy, who can be invested with this power, who will be the original clergy, and what standards will be set that satisfies/encompasses the diverse forms of religious expression?

Sincerely,
Kerry M. Phillips
Circle of the Jade Tiger

Editor's Note: Please see "Notes From the UnderWorld" on page 5 for a response to this letter



NOTES FROM THE UNDERWORLD



It has been a long time since I last wrote a column for the newsletter, and so much has happened in that time. It would take more than the space I have to enumerate the events that have taken place, so I will content myself with saying that the Network has grown by leaps and bounds. That is very good news to all pagans, and I am happy to have been a part of it from the beginning.

It would be naive, however, to think that growth of this magnitude would happen without some growing pains. A letter in this issue clearly lays out the discontent of one network member, and I wish to answer her concerns here.

In large part, the complaint centers on a supposed lack of communication. The member in question felt that she was not kept informed of the unfolding events as they happened, that the news concerning the meeting at the CPR weekend last March was not clearly presented to the Network (and, by extension, to her), that the issue of incorporation was kept away from anybody without e-mail, and that discrimination might be an ethic of EPN.

I looked into the archives of the newsletter and found the following:

Imbolc 1997 issue (page 6): "What about incorporation? Non-profit status? Anyone to help with the paperwork needed to accomplish this?" · Ostara 1997 issue (page 6): "There will be a meeting at the Cabin-Fever Retreat in Stockton Springs on Saturday morning, March 29, to which all EarthTides subscribers are invited. The focus of the meeting will be the future directions of EPN. This will have an impact on the Maine Pagan community as a whole, so please come and add your voice to the discussion, even if you are not spending the weekend! Some possible issues which may be covered include organizational structure, incorporation, political involvement, membership, and general guidelines and policies. YOUR opinions are important; please share them!"

Finally, the Beltane issue contained an article detailing what happened at the CPR meeting, as well as information on where to write or call to get involved.

I fail to understand how any member receiving - and reading - this newsletter could feel left out. These notices began appearing a full two months before the meeting, they made it clear what would be discussed, and any member unable to attend could have taken the time and responsibility to write down their thoughts and get them to someone who could present them at the meeting. As far as I can see, the only way to be left out of this would be to keep yourself out. Like the Prego commercial says, "It's in there."

Other issues raised by Kerry include the nature, size and reporting of EPN member groups, the make-up of the council, and ordination of clergy. I will answer these in general terms because the Network has barely begun the process on most of this and hasn't actually got hard and fast policies as yet.

The size of member groups (how many members a group must have to be listed as an EPN member congregation) and the annual reporting requirements of those groups are issues determined not by the Network, but by state and federal law. The IRS demands a report on member congregations each year, and failure to supply that information may have disastrous implications for those groups as well as the Network. EPN is not the first group to include these requirements in its bylaws. In fact, the draft EPN bylaws were based in large part on the bylaws of the Church of the Sacred Earth (COSE). Those involved in drafting the bylaws did not wish to reinvent the wheel and I don't blame them.

The council is proposed as a body where each member congregation has one representative plus one alternative, and solitaries have two. This again reflected the COSE document in an effort to simplify things. It was felt that this has worked for them, it should work for us at least for the interim. Right now, EPN has no statistics on its membership, so designing a representative body is difficult at best. When the figures are collected, we will be able to restructure the council if necessary.

With regard to ordination, it should be clearly understood that nothing has been decided as yet. There is much that needs to be considered and clarified. As it stands now, EPN is seeking to extend legal credence to ordinations granted by its member groups. To do that, EPN will need to draft standards by which this decision may be made, but these are in no way designed to control what the member groups do or who they choose as their leaders. If Geoff Miller wishes to be the ordained leader of the Circle of Anubis, and the Circle wants him in that position, he may be ordained under the legal umbrella of EPN provided that the Circle of Anubis meets the standards set by EPN. EPN will not determine the liturgy or the process of COA, but since it assumes the legal risk of Geoff's behavior, it should be entitled to require that Geoff and COA answer to them on certain issues. The issue of solitaries receiving ordination is another issue which will be dealt with separately.

There is much to be done. The Network has only started to deal with the many complicated and sometimes thorny issues that we face. We need all the help and input we can get. I would encourage Kerry Phillips (who I know, love and respect) to pick up the phone and get involved. EPN does not discriminate against people who do not have e-mail (the very word "discrimination" leaves a very bad taste in my mouth), but waiting at home for the Network to beat a path to your door is a sure-fire way to remain on the outside.

Jackal

READER'S FORUM: WHY I FOLLOW A PAGAN PATH

For me, it means a great deal more than simply "not" being Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist. Being Pagan means feeling a strong kinship with the elements and the spirit which are symbolized by that simple five-pointed star (pentagram/pentacle) some of us use as our primary symbol. (Other pantheons have their own symbols, of similar purpose.) It means feeling a physical and an emotional sensation of being connected with the Earth, Water, Fire, and Air; really enjoying the color, texture, scent, and sounds associated with those elements.

When I stretch out on the sun-warmed earth and smell its nearness, feel its loamy or sandy soils against my body and hands, I form a bond with the earth. When I enter the rolling waves of the ocean, or the crystal-clear rushing stream, and feel the cool (in Maine, COLD!) water splashing and supporting me, my physical self melts into the element of water and I become one with it. My soul sparkles like the sunlight and the moonlight that dance along its surface. When I sit by a roaring fire, gazing at its multi-colored, tattering flames, I am thrilled by its power to both comfort and consume. When I stand on a hilltop and feel the breeze rushing over and around me, almost buoying me in space, my heart and soul take wing and soar like eagles. I glory in these sensations. I celebrate them, and my spirit grows stronger, wider, higher, clearer.

Throughout my life, I have experienced the religious practices of several Christian churches. My upbringing was primarily Protestant -- Mom was a Sunday School teacher, and played hymns on the piano. She gave me her love of music, which I carry on, and I became aware of the power of music to amplify and project spiritual feelings. As a teenager, I chose to join the Society of Friends (Quakers). The original attraction, I humbly confess, was that my boyfriend was a member of that sect. But always eager to learn, I listened to and practiced the Quaker philosophy of "There is that of God in every man." (Nowadays, we'd change that to "every person"!)

In traditional meetings, we sat in community, but in silence, listening for enlightenment from Above -- or from Within. It was a very personal relationship with one's spiritual Source, and any one of us was free to share aloud whatever insights we received.

But the Quaker way still was not quite enough to complete my connection to the greatness of All Being. The God was only part of the puzzle, unseen, yet visualized as the Great White Father, untouchable, except by thought, and unknowable, except by faith. What of the Mother? Later on, while in college, I participated in the 'folk mass' services popular to Catholic churches in college towns -- they needed a guitar player! The Catholics came closer to acknowledging the duality of spirit in their veneration of Mary as Mother of God (Jesus), and the every-turning cycle of birth, life and death had a slightly brighter ring to it in that context. Yet, none of the religions I experienced spoke to me on much more than an intellectual level. What was my personal role in contributing to and nurturing the cycles of life?

I had begun to read about Wicca, out of curiosity, which eventually led me to realize how modern religions evolved from the foundations of many Pagan practices. The more I study, the more obvious it is how much was borrowed (and how much was lost!) from the ancient ways. Most modern religions have not maintained a complete reflection of the struggle for balance which in Nature is such an ever-present fact. Male and Female, Yin and Yang, Earth, Air, Fire, and Water: the cycles of Being are right before our eyes at all times. The ancient people were closer to the raw reality of the natural forces; their survival depended upon understanding and respecting these forces. That awareness is the foundation of the fifth element, Spirit.

We CAN see these elements, we CAN touch them, and we CAN know their truths, by honoring the essence of their roles in our daily lives. I believe that these "essences", in our spiritual vision, are what ancient people called Gods and Goddesses -- imbued with the highest powers of which mortal creatures could conceive. These Deities we reclaim, as we reclaim our connection to the natural elements. All my previous glimpses of spirituality can be summed up in Cunningham's explanation: "The Goddess and God are both within ourselves and manifest in all nature." Our spiritual capabilities are the mirror of these Deities, however we define them individually. "As Above, so below" it is said. As I continue to study, and listen, and think, I believe that the so-called "Pagan" paths, in all their rich variety, reflect a fuller comprehension of the whole truth of our existence. This is what it means to me -- to be Pagan! Blessed Be!!

-Aree Blackcat

OTHER PAGAN PUBLICATIONS

EarthTides Pagan Network News has subscription exchanges with the following Pagan publications. They are all worth your interest:

Horns and Crescent PO Box 540622 Millia MA 02054

Our Pagan Times New Moon New York PO Box 1471
Madison Square Station New York NY 10159

PAEAN PO Box 635 Farmington NH 03835

That Bonny Road PO Box 857 Bath ME 04530

The Northern Grove PO Box 5363 Portland ME 04101

THE PAGAN PANTRY

Maine has its own "Pagan Pantry"! It is here to help people and animals in need, Pagan or not. Those who are in need should call (207) 296-3482 and ask for "Star". You may also write to her at PO Box 10, Stetson, Maine 04488

Donations of non-perishable food, money, and non-food items such as cleansers, pet food, toilet paper, shampoo, etc. can be dropped off at Silo 7 in Bangor, Dragon of the Mist in Skowhegan or with Star in Stetson - call for directions.

NEWS FROM IMMANENT GROVE

Immanent Grove, a Gnostic Pagan fellowship which has been taking form slowly for a couple of years now, has legally organized as a "Local Independent Church" under Maine law. We are extraordinarily happy about this, for a number of reasons. The process was actually quite simple, once we had all the right information and paperwork, and we would encourage any coven or other form of working Pagan group to do the same.

The issue of clergy status is pretty complex, given the diversity in our Pagan community. Each tradition defines clergy in its own way (and should!); some require some sort of more or less rigorous training followed by ordination, others allow for self-initiation whenever one feels it is appropriate.

In addition to the religious or spiritual issues regarding ordination, however, there are some very definite legal ones. Maine statute defines who can perform a legal wedding: "Every cleric...engaged in the service of the religious body to which the cleric belongs or person licensed to preach by an association of ministers, religious seminary, or ecclesiastical body...may solemnize marriages."

While filing to organize as a Local Independent Church is not required by law, Grove members felt that we needed to take that step in order to document our existence as a religious body, equal in both legitimacy and legal rights to those groups following a monotheistic path.

If one wants to be able to perform legal marriages, one can become a notary, of course, but this is a civil rather than a religious position. For a small fee the Universal Life Church will grant you a legitimate certificate of ordination, but our feeling was "if the Christians can ordain legal clergy, we should be able to do the same." We felt that it was an issue of our religious freedom, and the separation of Church and state, a moral high ground, if you will. We refused to devalue the importance of the years of study, practice, leadership and the pursuit of wisdom we Pagans (as well as Christians) accrue to become working clergy.

Immanent Grove also felt that, by becoming a Local Independent Church, we would further legitimize the status of all Pagan groups in the state. Why wait? The sooner this is done, the sooner more and more people will understand that we are not some fly-by-night (pun intended) group of weirdoes; we'll be able to say we've been state-recognized organized church for years! If others follow, we'll be able to say, "And we're not alone--there are similar groups all over the state."

This decision is, we think, one step along the way to having a legally tax-free piece of sacred ground for our own use, and toward closing the other gaps between "them" and "us". The system exists--let's learn how it works, and make it work for us, instead of complaining about how it favors "them"!

- Harper Meader and Arwen Evenstar

STARCAT'S CORNER



There is a bumper sticker that I've always liked that says "There Are More of Us Than You Think." In reflecting on pagans in the community in Maine and New England, it seems to me to be a very true statement.

Over the summer I encounter more pagans (outside of my circle of family and friends) than at any other time of the year, probably due to the warm weather and the outdoor events being held around the state. I attend what I call "open-minded" fairs that take place each year: WERU's Full Circle Summer Fair, the Maine Festival, and the Common Ground Fair. There I see many pagans, as well as like-minded folks (like my Mom, a "natural pagan" who considers herself agnostic yet believes in reincarnation and the power of the Earth, and who taught me a system of ethics that I later discovered parallels most pagan faiths). Also at the fairs, I find pagans doing outreach to the local community - such as the folks who staff the Earthtides booth and give lectures on Wicca (my thanks to all of you!). In the summer, too, I get out and walk more. I often see houses with bountiful herb gardens and stars-and-moon decorations, and I wonder...

At other times of the year, however, and in the mainstream media, pagans usually tend to fade into the background. An exception is around Samhain (Halloween), when the local press try to locate and interview a "real" witch. But why are we not generally recognized as members of a legitimate religion? There are a few reasons.

Some might say it's because of the members of Christian community, some of whom fear pagans and think of us as devil-worshippers. But here in Maine, although some prejudice certainly exists, I think ignorance is a more common factor. Many people in the general public simply don't know much about pagans or Wiccans. They think of witches as characters in movies or fairy tales, or know about us only on the periphery of their experience (like Deadheads, who used to get press only when the band was in town, but who were and are part of life in Maine).

Another reason, which also contributes to why people are ignorant of our beliefs, is the highly individual, close-knit nature of pagans. I generally think that this is a good thing, since one's belief system is very personalized. We don't try and convert others to our faith, nor should we. But the way most pagans feel about being part of any organized system can also work to our disadvantage, when the work that we do in the community is not seen as part of our pagan life-path.

(Continued on page 8)

FOOLERY

Once ever so long ago the Goddess looked upon her human children and found them rather dull and a bit too serious about themselves and their concerns. For her own amusement and to our own advancement she caused an oracle to be made that a great and mysterious storm was coming, that it would arrive soon, very soon, but that this was no normal storm, indeed it would be the most fascinating storm that ever occurred because it would be a storm sure to effect none but fools and only fools would become wet from it.

Excited mumbling began to arise from the crowd "a storm that would wet only fools, a storm that would wet only fools" There was one scholar who contemplated this prediction only briefly then he carefully covered his head and then proceeded with haste to the shelter of his little home. He was the only one who took just such actions because everyone else proceeded to collect in the very center of town hoping for great amusement in seeing the fools who were doomed to be drenched by the coming down pour, it was treated as a great holiday event for indeed only fools would be touched by this great rain.

The sky above darkened and the wind picked up, excitement grew and grew but found no voice as all waited in complete anticipation and when a great burst of lightning broke across the sky it's roaring thunder announced the downpour as the great crowd burst as well into roaring laughter as the rain fell down upon them. Their laughter stopped as quickly as it came as the deluge pattered down upon them all soaking first their hair and cloaks but not stopping until it had soaked through everyone and every garment that they wore. And when every one who stood in the great crowd was completely and utterly soaked through and through it ended as quickly as it began and the warm sun again fell down upon them.

As the storm stopped the scholar once again left the shelter and walked into the light of this new day, and the people of the town on seeing him saw his dry and comfortable condition and at once and together they cried " Fool, Fool see the Fool."

Growing excited they pelted him with mud pies and jostled him about and he gave ground and cried out in acknowledgement "Yes masters I am the fool, and well do I seek to learn from such sagious asses as I now behold, let me relate to you the great extent of my own folly."

And so he began a speech that along with the day established his fame and fortune as the first and foremost fool of the land.

A major part of a Fools job is to make fools of those about him, this isn't hard as it's just a question of being a fool and letting others see oneself as a fool. Foolish-

ness is contagious, one cannot see a fool without recognizing a fool, and yet by recognizing a fool we break a fundamental code of wisdom (being that the first step to wisdom is to know that you know nothing) When the Christians took over from the Pagans this nature of foolery soon propelled it into controversy, Many Church leaders just couldn't take the refusal to respect and honor the pundits and their wisdom, yet many saw that this disregard for cocksureness was a pleasant relish for a sanctimonious time.

Still bringing our know it allism down a notch (although a vital task especially for times such as our own,) Is only part of what a fool is.

Although our society likes to look on the world and "creation" as an orderly and well regulated place and to see the universe running like clockwork on specific and orderly laws (kind of hard to leave divine master plan out of that kind of description) The Fool honors the link between chaos and both the creative and destructive forces around us. The Fool gives chaos it's due in a society that likes to

think that laws and order are the more honorable side of the set of opposites that also involves chaos.

- Robin Whitethorn

STARCAT'S CORNER (CONT.)

For example, many pagans I know work in very ethical, caring professions. Pagans are nurses, social workers, healers, environmentalists, teachers, etc. But in their work lives, they might not talk about or openly display their pagan faith (sometimes a necessary precaution for keeping the job). Many pagans also do volunteer work, or offer help to those they encounter who are in need. This is not often done as overtly pagan work (with exceptions of course, like the great work being done by the Pagan Pantry in the Bangor area).

The most important thing, of course, is that the work is being done. But I for one would like to see more awareness of the pagan contribution to the community. How can we help create this awareness? I think the new direction being taken by Earthtides is on track; I'm curious about what will happen in the next few months, and I hope many people will participate. Another development, which I only have enough space (and experience) to touch on here, is the pagan community's use of the Internet. From e-mail lists to chat rooms to web pages, the anonymity and often easy access to the Net is encouraging many folks to get in touch.

We as pagans also need to speak up in public about who we are and what we believe in (easier said than done). People are less likely to discriminate against those they can see and recognize as productive members of the community.

- Starcat

BYLAWS OF THE EARTHTIDES PAGAN NETWORK: A UNION OF MAINE PAGAN CONGREGATIONS AND SOLITARIES

Editor's Note: These are the current bylaws as drawn up by the bylaws committee and approved by the ad hoc council. These bylaws were necessary for the incorporation of EarthTides Pagan Network. They represent a huge amount of work and all all Maine Pagans owe the committee and especially Arwen (who coordinated it) a debt of gratitude. The bylaws may be modified by the membership at the annual meeting to be held early in 1998.

I. Council

A. EarthTides Maine Pagan Network (hereinafter called EPN) shall be governed by a Council comprised of one (1) representative of each member congregation, and two representatives of solitaries; representatives shall have one (1) vote each. Member congregations are free to choose representatives and alternates as they wish, provided that only full members of EPN are chosen to sit on the Council. Alternates may attend and speak at all Council meetings, and vote if the representative is not present; it is recommended that alternates attend Council meetings if possible, to provide for continuity. It shall be the responsibility of representatives and alternatives to maintain good communications, both with the other Council members, and with the groups they represent, as well as to attend meetings as may be necessary.

B. The Council is the body of EPN responsible for decision-making and day-to-day operations between annual meetings. Its duties shall include the determination of eligibility of candidate member congregations, the final determination of eligibility and conveyance of ordinations, and assisting with the work of both standing and ad hoc committees, such as encouraging networking among Maine pagans, scheduling of open events and public relations.

C. Each Council member shall have only one vote regardless of the number of congregations to which he/she may belong. Council members may still vote the proxies of other Council members, however.

II. Members

A. Full Members: Full members of EPN shall be defined as those adult residents of the State of Maine whose annual dues are paid up to date. Membership shall lapse if dues is more than one month in arrears.

B. Associate Members: Associate members of EPN shall be defined as adults residing outside the State of Maine whose annual dues is paid up to date. Membership shall lapse if dues is more than one month in arrears. Associate members may not vote or hold office, but are welcome to attend and speak at the annual meeting.

C. Annual Dues: Annual dues for both full and associate members shall be set at \$11.00 per person or household, and shall include a subscription to EarthTides Pagan Network News (hereafter called EPNN).

III. Solitaries.

A. Representation for solitaries: The solitary members of EPN (defined as full members who are not a part of an EPN member congregation) will, as a group, have two elected representatives to the Council. Representatives will serve a term of approximately three years (depending on annual meeting dates), standing for election in time to act as representative at the annual meeting. It shall be the responsibility of representatives and alternates to maintain good communications both with the other Council members, and with the solitaries they represent, as well as to attend meetings as may be necessary.

B. Alternate Representative: There will be a third elected position, designated as the alternate representative, who may vote when a solitary representative is unable to fulfill his or her duties.

C. Eligibility: Any solitary member may run for, and vote on candidates for, the position of representative for solitaries.

D. Voting: In the Mabon issue of EPNN, notification will be given announcing a request for candidates. Candidates will send biographical information and position statements to EPNN before the deadline for the Samhain issue, in which this information, and ballots for solitary members, will be published. Ballots must be mailed to the Council at least two weeks before publication deadline of the Yule edition of EPNN, in which the election results will be published. Ballots will be counted by at least two members of the Council. Each voting solitary may vote for three candidates, ranked in order of preference. The first two choices will be representatives, the third choice will be the alternate.

IV. Board of Directors

A. A Board of Directors consisting of a president, a vice-president, a recording secretary, a corresponding secretary, and a treasurer shall be chosen from members of the Council. The duties of the Board shall include administration of EPN funds, attention to all legal issues, maintaining such correspondence as shall be necessary, and the keeping of all official records.

B. Directors shall be elected by the Council of EarthTides for terms of approximately three (3) years corresponding to the annual meeting dates. Any director may be removed from office by a vote of three quarters of the Council. Elections shall be held at the annual meeting. Council members not attending the annual meeting, and having no alternate available, may vote by written proxy.

(Continued on page 10)

BYLAWS OF THE EARTHTIDES PAGAN NETWORK (CONTINUED)

V. Congregations

A. A Congregation is defined as three (3) or more adults worshipping together in any Pagan tradition. At least 50% of those in each member congregation must be full members of EPN. Member congregation status in EPN shall be conferred by the Council upon receipt of a request, accompanied by a description of the congregation, including a list of members (craft and mundane names), indicating which are EarthTides members. Upon the approval of the Council, the new congregation shall choose one (1) representative to the Council and one alternate representative, who shall serve at the pleasure of the group he/she represents. A census shall be taken each year before the annual meeting to determine the eligibility of each member congregation.

B. Each member congregation shall be self-governing. It shall be free to select its membership, select, train and ordain its clergy, and to believe and worship in its own manner according to its traditions.

C. Member congregations must comply with all local, state and federal laws, including those governing non-profit religious corporations. Failure to comply will be grounds for immediate action.

D. Member congregations may be moved to inactive status for disciplinary reasons by the Council. An 80% vote of the Council (excluding the representatives of the congregation in question) is required for inactivation. A vote on disenfranchisement (permanent removal from the Council) shall be held after a minimum waiting period of three months. The vote to disenfranchise shall be held at a Council meeting of which the full membership has been informed of the agenda. An 80% vote of the active members of the Council is required to disenfranchise a congregation. Congregation deactivation and disenfranchisement shall have no effect on any individual's membership in EarthTides.

VI. Clergy

A. One of the functions of EarthTides is to provide an avenue for the ordination of solitary clergy who will meet legal requirements in the State of Maine. [While member congregations may incorporate as Independent Local Churches under Maine law, and thus designate their own clergy, the law makes no provision for solitaries to do the same.] Ordained clergy shall perform all legally binding ceremonies and appropriate clerical functions as specified by both the beliefs of their own traditions and local and state law. Ordained clergy must maintain full membership in EPN.

B. The procedures for ordination will be as follows: first, the candidate must be recommended to the Council by the Ordination Committee. Second, the candidate must meet the approval of the Council via whatever criteria the Council deems appropriate and be approved by a unanimous vote of the Council for provisional ordination. There shall be a year and a day probationary period, followed by a vote by the Council for final

ordination. Final ordination shall require a unanimous vote of the Council. Failure to receive final ordination revokes provisional ordination. Normal disciplinary procedures shall apply to probationary ministers with the exceptions noted.

C. Before each annual meeting, all clergy shall provide the Council with an annual account of how they have been using their ministry. Any minister not reporting or having not used her/his ministry during the past year, or who is no longer a full member of EPN, may, at the discretion of the Council, be moved to inactive status. Any minister so inactivated shall be notified by mail at his/her last known address. Inactive ministers may not perform any legal ceremonies under the auspices of EPN. Inactive ministers may petition the Council for reactivation at any time. The Council shall consider all requests at their earliest convenience.

D. Ministers must comply with all local, state, and federal laws and procedures regarding their official functions. Failure to comply will be grounds for immediate action by the Directors.

E. A minister may also be moved to inactive status for disciplinary reasons by a two thirds vote of the Council. Reactivation of an inactive minister shall require a two thirds vote of the Council. Reactivated ministers are on probation for a year and a day. Ministers may be defrocked (stripped of ministerial credentials) by an 80% vote of the Council (excluding any members of the minister's own congregation). Defrocking shall require a vote of deactivation, followed by a minimum of one month's waiting period, followed by a Council meeting of which the full membership has been informed of the agenda. Failure by the Council to reactivate or defrock an inactive minister leaves that minister inactive. The Council may move to defrock any minister on probation without first deactivating them. Deactivation and defrocking shall have no effect on an individual's membership in the Church.

VII. Other Procedural Notes

A. A quorum for any official Council meeting shall consist of a majority of members of the Council, including at least two Directors, either in person or by mail, e-mail, telephone, or written proxy.

B. In the event of dissolution of EarthTides Maine Pagan Network, all assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501C(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of the county in which the principal office of EPN is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

C. These By-Laws and Procedures may be amended by affirmative vote of 80% of the Council.

EPN ORGANIZATION EXPLANATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE

**HEY YOU!, YEAH YOU! DID YOU FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WHEN IT APPEARED IN THE LAST ISSUE?
IF NOT PLEASE DO IT NOW! WE NEED THIS INFORMATION FOR THE FUTURE OF EARTH TIDES**

EarthTides Pagan Network is now an official, tax-exempt organization! Thanks to a lot of hard work and organizing, we are now officially recognized by the State of Maine. This means that we no longer have to pay taxes for printing or supplies, and any moneys collected at fairs are non-taxable. Possible future endeavors include ordination of clergy and taking part in political matters.

We have a lot of dreams and plans for EPN and they are about to become a reality. In order for this to succeed, however, we need input from all our members. Bylaws of how EPN is to be run are now in place. There are rules regarding what a Coven is, and provisions made for Solitary Practitioners.

Basically: Full members are those adult residents of Maine who have paid up membership dues. Associate members are non-Maine residents who have paid-up dues. Annual dues for both types of members are \$11 per person, household, or business. All named adult members of a household or business are members. Note: there are other categories of subscriber, for instance subscription exchanges, but only those that pay dues to EPN are members. A group, coven or organization will consist of at least three (3) adults who practice together. At least 50% of coven members must be EPN members. Each group will be self-governing. A Solitary is any member of EPN that does not belong to an EPN member coven. See the bylaws in this issue for further clarification.

All groups may have one (1) representative and one (1) alternate to EPN council. Each coven will elect or appoint its own representative. Solitaries will vote two (2) total members to the council and one (1) alternate; representatives will be chosen from interested solitary members. The council will choose five (5) representatives from the council to form a Board of Directors.

The enclosed questionnaire needs to be filled out and mailed back to EarthTides if you wish to participate in the organized network. Each member household or business should fill one out; please include your mailing label with the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be read only by the ad-hoc Board of Directors. Please call, write or e-mail with any questions.

NOTES:

1. Subscription Name: This can be either mundane or craft, but we need to know who we're talking to.
3. If there are several members at household or business, not on label, please tell us. It will be important for voting.
5. Yes/No. Should be yes if you want to vote for Solitary representative. No if your group will be a member group.
- 6 & 7 are optional. This info is helpful for cross-checking and assigning correct council representation.
- 8 Yes/No. If yes (please say yes) please also send a biography sketch of yourself. Include things like path, EPN future, geographic location. This bio will be published in the Samhain issue along with the ballot for solitary representatives
- 9 Household, business, associate, or full. Please fill us in on each member.
- 10 e-mail address. If you have one; we won't discriminate if you don't.

Mail completed questionnaire and mailing label to: EPN PO Box 161 East Winthrop, ME 04343

Write to that address with questions, or call 848-2850, or e-mail mugwert@ime.net

1. EPN subscription name	
2. EPN subscription address	
3. Name(s) of other EPN members	
4. Craft name(s) (optional)	
5. Solitary(s) (Yes or No)	
6. Coven name (optional)	
7. Other members of coven (optional)	
8. If solitary, will be board member? see note #8 above	
9. EPN member type	
10. e-mail address (optional)	

EPN
P.O. Box 161
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